

Interviewed by: Kathleen Irving, 26 September 2001

Transcribed by: Marilyn Hunting, December 2001

Tyrrell Seager: This is Dr. Tyrrell R. Seager, I'm a son of Orin Austin Seager and Mary Robinson and I'm married to Dorothy Mae Hodson, a good English name. Birth date is January 30, 1909. I have two children, Tyrrell Robert Seager, born about 1945, and Kara Irene, who was born about 1948.

The first ten years of my practice was in Northern Nevada and Bingham Canyon, Utah; with contracts with the mining industry. Dr. Ray Spendlove had come out here in the first part of 1946 to start his private practice after being released from the armed services. He was a native of Bingham Canyon and I had gotten acquainted with him at the Bingham Canyon hospital.

In June of 1946 Dr. Spendlove called me and said they were badly in need of a general surgeon in the area and had quite a few cases that needed to be operated on, seven hundred, but were too difficult to get into Salt Lake and asked me if I would come out and see what I thought of the area. We found the time to drive out one weekend and coming through Strawberry Valley we saw a flock of sage hens and we were admiring the mountains all the way out. Driving was slow in places because a lot of the road hadn't been hard surfaced yet.

Kathleen Irving (KI): Can you remember about how far it had been hard surfaced?

Dr. Seager: Well, it was just in places. They had evidently picked out places that needed done the most. Of course, that was the way a lot of the early roads were. Back at that time, Parley's Canyon wasn't even hard-surfaced. That was just still a graded road. We enjoyed the trip out very much. It was a beautiful day and the mountains were beautiful.

After getting here, we met with Dr. [Ray] Spendlove and his senior partner, Dr. [Farley] Eskelson. Then we went to the Vernal Drug Store and talked to Rice Cooper, who was a major druggist in the area. We also talked to Hugh Colton, who was an attorney here and happened to live on Second West; where we, after getting established here, bought a house. People told us that a new hospital was going to be built, so that we would have adequate place to work. We knew that to begin with we would just be working in a remodeled parish house on Main Street that Dr. Eskelson had acquired to use as a hospital.

KI: Do you know how long Dr. Eskelson was here before you came?

Dr. Seager: I don't remember just how long he was here. He had actually practiced in Green River, Wyoming, before moving down here to Vernal. I've never been one to pry into people's private affairs, so I never did find out why he had made that move.

KI: I was wondering maybe how long he'd been in the Episcopal Parish House, as a hospital, before you got here. Had it been several years or just a short time?

Dr. Seager: I just don't know. It wasn't something that concerned me. I was so busy starting out, taking care of surgical cases here, and finding a place to live.

The oil boon in the Basin and Rangely had started and we couldn't find a place to live when we first got here. We finally found a place. Drs. Eskelson and Spendlove hadn't found a place for us because they didn't know whether we would stay or not. We finally found a place on First South and Third West that satisfied our needs for the first year.

KI: Did you like that house, Dorothy?

Dorothy Seager: Yes, it was all right. It was right across from where Dr. Shimmin is now. Right on that corner.

Dr. Seager: Well, it was actually drafty and just had a coal furnace.

Dorothy: It worked out all right.

KI: Then you moved over here?

Dorothy: Yes, as soon as we could line up a place of our own; that's what we wanted.

Dr. Seager: Yes, we rented that house for one year, then we bought this and got a man from Salt Lake to live with us for three months and remodel it.

KI: I'd like to mention that your house is at 68 North 200 West. Tell me what the interior of the old hospital over here looked like and about your surgery.

Dr. Seager: Well, from Main Street there was a walk between Dr. Eskelson's house and the parish church annex and there was a ramp leading into the center part of the remodeled hospital. The same ramp led into Dr. Eskelson's house. In the back (east) part of the building was a remodeled kitchen, which turned out to be the operating room. It had a fairly good ceiling light and an operating table that was actually just an old examination table. But it could be adjusted some to get surgical patients into different positions.

At that time we just had three materials for anesthesia. The one that was used the most was ether, which was dripped onto a mask over the patient's face. It was very effective as long as the anesthesia was given about the right amount.

KI: Were you responsible, as the doctor, to take care of the anesthesia or was there an anesthesiologist?

Dr. Seager: Well, most of the time I would do the surgery with Dr. Spendlove assisting and Dr. Eskelson would give the anesthetic. For very short procedures, like pulling a tooth or cutting off a finger, you might just use chloroform. That was another agent, but it had to be used carefully because it was toxic material. Our other two methods of anesthesia were spinal anesthetic and local anesthetic. Of course, spinal anesthesia has always been popular with the majority of general surgeons that just wanted to operate somewhere below the rib cage. It was never available for the upper part of the body.

Local anesthetic has greatly improved since that time. I can't even remember right now

what the name of the local anesthetic was that we used at that time. Another agent that we used for just a very short procedure, especially around the head and neck, was local cocaine. Cocaine was in a ten percent solution that, if it was applied to any mucus membranes, would deaden the mucus membrane area for around forty-five minutes to an hour.

KI: So have you seen some improvements in anesthesia over the years?

Dr. Seager: Well, actually, after getting the new hospital in 1949 and much better facilities for working, we still had the same type of anesthesia. We didn't get the first gas machine to use gas-type anesthesia until about 1959. It was around ten years before we had a gas machine.

KI: They existed in other places? We just didn't have one here?

Dr. Seager: Right. They were being used earlier in hospitals in Salt Lake, for instance, but a gas machine was an expensive piece of equipment and our equipment at the new county hospital was always a little meager. Sometimes, in order to have a surgical instrument that I had to have, I would buy it myself. Most of that was taking care of fractures.

Of course, we did every kind of surgery that was being done at the time, except for the gastroenterology surgery. We just did emergency surgery in the abdomen. Well, gallbladder surgery wasn't emergency, but a lot of surgery in the abdomen was due to injuries, as a matter of fact, the first case I did after getting out here on July 1, 1946. I suppose the operation was on July 2nd but it was a man that had had a ruptured intestine and needed immediate repair. So, that was the way we started with our general surgery here was to take care of that man.

KI: Could you tell me about delivering babies, too? I know you mentioned that in Pennsylvania you had to deliver a certain number of babies during your senior year.

Dr. Seager: In the forties and into the fifties most general surgeons, especially in outlying communities, had to do general practice, too, and general practice included obstetrics. So, the obstetrical practice was kind of equally divided between the three of us. One woman would like to have Dr. Spendlove and another one would like to have me. It was just a matter of choice, except Dr. Spendlove and I were partners, and we were closely-related partners. We took care of each other's cases. It all depended on which one of us was available at the time of delivery as to which one would take care of it. On difficult cases, of course, we would consult together on the delivery.

About six percent of our cases were Caesarian section, and, of course, in those cases we followed the usual practice. I would be the surgeon, Dr. Spendlove would be the assistant, and Dr. Eskelson would give the anesthetic. We managed a lot of deliveries without too much anesthetic.

I guess the first five years I was here we had mostly home deliveries. Home deliveries were a matter of having some member of the family dropping a little ether on the mask for us—just during the pains. As the pains got more severe, the doctor would ask the family member to drop a little more ether a little sooner. That was a very safe practice because the patient never got too much anesthetic. It was just barely enough to partly deaden the pain, but not completely. And a lot of women didn't want any anesthetic at all. A lot of women refused having anesthetic.

They wanted the experience of suffering the pain that went along with having a baby. I don't know how it is with you women nowadays, but in the past, a lot of women were that way. It was always my experience that women withstood pain better than men do. That is the difference between the sexes. Well, women always had to be tough in order to get along with a man.

KI: How many babies did you deliver out here?

Dr. Seager: Well, the number that I delivered here in the Basin was around 4,000, and about six percent of those were by Caesarian section.

KI: Could you tell me what other kinds of injuries you saw? You mentioned you were an industrial doctor. What does an industrial doctor do?

Dr. Seager: When you talk about injuries, it covers quite a wide field. Injuries could be from falling, being crushed, by being hit by something, by being knocked off from a drilling platform. On the farms and ranches, getting injured in the machinery being used was quite common. Amputations or repairing amputations was quite common. In the lumber industry a lot of protective devices hadn't been established in the lumber mills, so getting caught in the saw occurred quite often.

We had, starting from the head down, quite a few depressed skull fractures, where you had to drill into the skull and use an elevation instrument to pry the skull back out where it belonged. Sometimes in athletics, a head injury would rupture an artery alongside of the head, that, if it wasn't drilled into and tied off within two or three hours, the athlete would end up being dead.

Nose fractures were quite common. That's a case where you would use a liquid cocaine anesthetic in the nose, then pry the nasal bones back in place. Of course, a lot of nasal fractures occurred that never got repaired. The individuals just spent the rest of their time having a crooked nose.

Facial injuries were quite common, especially fractures of the jaw. Most of those we had to use fine wire to wire the lower mandible teeth to the maxilla teeth, in order to have the jaw smooth and heal back in normal position. A case like that would have to use a straw and a liquid diet for about six weeks before the jaw healed well enough to start on soft food.

Mastoid operations were quite common. Before the advent of penicillin, ear infections that involved the mastoid (most people don't know where the mastoid is [relates to the ear]), but getting infection in the mastoid required them to be opened up and drained. Most of the mastoids were from around five to twelve years of age. You tried to operate on them in such a manner that you wouldn't leave too much of a scar.

We had quite a few thyroid operations because before the days of iodized salt, thyroid tumors were quite common. In the chest; broken ribs were very common. There's about a hundred different ways that you can get broken ribs. They were mostly taken care of by just binding the chest a little bit so the breathing didn't cause too much movement of the rib cage. But sometimes a jagged end of a rib bone would cause a ruptured lung on one side and that would usually require prying the rib back out where it belonged and using a tube down the trachea in order to suck out the lung and let it re-expand again.

Fractures of the fingers and wrist bones and arm bones were very common at all ages.

Most of them weren't compound fractures where the bone extruded through the flesh, so they were all taken care of by using a little anesthetic and getting the bone back in place and putting a plaster cast on.

Amputations of the fingers and part of the arm and sometimes the whole arm was required after some crushing injuries and the injuries that severed the blood vessels and nerves.

The abdomen, as far as injuries are concerned, they were anything: a fractured liver, a fractured spleen, a fractured kidney. Any kind of a blow to the abdominal area from the front to the side or the back could result in a kidney, spleen or liver being partly torn, and always resulted in bleeding inside the abdomen. Surgery would be required to remove part of the injured organ. The three organs mentioned don't heal back together again. The injured part has to be removed and the bleeding controlled.

Other abdominal operations were usually due to developing gallstones or having appendicitis. Operating for appendicitis was almost a daily procedure. In a large population, somebody gets appendicitis almost every day of the week. Developing gallstones and gallbladder infection is another fairly common occurrence. As far I know, these two situations still occur quite frequently today.

Pelvic fractures were fairly common due to crushing injuries. Any kind of accident could result in a broken pelvis. Leg fractures were always quite common.

KI: One thing I was wondering about was injuries in the mining and oilfields. You used to see a lot of those cases.

Dr. Seager: In the late forties and fifties we had about six different major well drilling companies here and in Rangely and a lot of wells were being drilled. None of the oil drilling companies at that time had any first aid experience. They would just hire a new man on the rig that hadn't had any previous experience. A lot of farm boys would try to get a job with one of the drilling companies and get on the drilling rig the first day without any previous experience. A lot of those men would get injured the very first day. They would get crushed between the drilling pipe and the rig or they would get knocked off the platform. They would get involved in part of the rig that they hadn't enough experience to be able to avoid getting injured.

Of course, as time went on, drilling companies, the same as in the mining industry, got a little smarter, and in order to avoid high insurance rates and having men that would have to have a lot of expensive rehabilitation, they made a practice of training new employees better. Now, in the year 2001, there is still a lot of drilling taking place in the Basin, but not very many injuries occur. The same thing happened in all the industrial occupations. Not nearly as many injuries as used to occur.

KI: Didn't you serve as a company doctor for a couple of companies here?

Dr. Seager: Being a company doctor meant that all of the employees had to be seen by the company doctor for any medical care. Other members of the family could choose another doctor if they wished. I was actually a company doctor for American Gilsonite almost from the first day I got here because I was acquainted with the general manager of American Gilsonite Company from when I had spent time in Nevada. The general manager in '46 was named Baker. The last general manager of American Gilsonite was Dewey. He came from Grand Junction, Colorado.

His father was an engineer and built the bridge over the Colorado River west of Grand Junction. It was a one lane bridge and they just always called it the Dewey Bridge. If you could see somebody on the other side, you would make motions to each other to see who would go across first. It was a road between Cisco, Utah, and Moab, following the Colorado River. Of course, it is a state highway now.

I was also the company doctor for the Little Bonanza mines, all of the Chevron properties in the Basin and Rangle, Colorado, the phosphate mines, several smaller companies, and a lumber company.

KI: Can you tell me what was your favorite thing to do as a doctor? What did you really enjoy doing?

Dr. Seager: I don't know whether you could use the word enjoy or not because a lot of the work was kind of tragic. You had a grieving family on your hands and were anxious about how the end results were going to be with a surgical case and an injured person. I tried to be sympathetic, I guess it would be proper to say. I enjoyed being a doctor. I enjoyed having people appreciate what I did for them, to be thankful that they had someone available that could take care of them. I think that is about the only way to put it.

KI: You mentioned to me that you and Dr. Spendlove built the medical center that is across the street from you [approximately 75 North 200 West].

Dr. Seager: Our first office building was on Main Street, on the south side of Main Street between Zions Bank and First West. It was a very inadequate building; it was on the ground floor. It is one of those shops now, I don't remember which one. During 1947 we got a contractor by the name of Fran Felch to build a Vernal Clinic building for us in the block between Vernal Avenue and First East on the south side of the street [approximately 62 East Main]. That building was a two-story building and we had formed a partnership with Dr. Dan Price, who was a dentist. He occupied the top floor, the second floor. Dr. Eskelson, Dr. Spendlove and myself had the offices in the bottom floor. We leased that building for fifteen years. Then Dr. Eskelson had left us, so Dr. Price, Dr. Spendlove, and myself bought this lot across the street and built what we called the Vernal Clinic Building there. That was 67 North 2nd West. We built it in 1960. I had offices in that building about for about sixteen years. Then I retired in 1976.

KI: Let me ask you questions about the first new hospital they built on First North. How many beds did it have in it?

Dr. Seager: Well, there was a ward that had about a dozen beds in it, then there were semi-private rooms which would have two beds to a room. So there were about thirty-five beds altogether. I don't remember any private rooms, but some of the time both beds wouldn't be occupied.

KI: So now, I would like you to tell me about Dr. Eskelson's ranch and what kept you here, because you liked the mountains and so forth.

Dr. Seager: Well, during the very first year I was here, I had a verbal agreement with Dr.

Spendlove and Dr. Eskelson that I could take a few days off a couple of times a month. Naturally, because of the conditions that existed, both Dr. Spendlove and Dr. Eskelson were anxious for me to be satisfied with the practice here and stay here. Our first understanding was that it might be just a temporary practice. But Dr. Eskelson knew everyone in the Basin and he lined up a man by the name of Steve Stringham, who was a son of Bry Stringham, that herded sheep on the mountain. He lined up Steve to take me on a pack trip up to the Kidney Lakes area. We made two different pack trips into the Kidney Lakes area that summer and fall.

As time went by, I got acquainted with all the individuals that were making pack trips into the High Uintas. We didn't have any backpackers back at that time. All of the travel into the High Uintas was on horseback with pack animals. I guess during that first ten years, I made pack trips with Steve Stringham and George Walkup, who was a forest ranger over at Farm Creek, called the Elkhorn Basin.

I had quite a few patients from Duchesne County. The Yack brothers that were in the honey business in Roosevelt became good friends and they invited me to go on pack trips with them up into the Chipeta Lake area. On the eastern part of the mountain I had gotten acquainted with Ralph Alexander, who had a contract to clear all the trees off the route that had been surveyed for what is now called the Red Cloud Loop Highway. He had horses and pack animals and a four-wheel drive Dodge power wagon. He had camps in the Dry Fork area to work from there up to the Trout Creek Basin. On Saturdays and Sundays we would use the riding horses to ride the old Carter Trail across the mountain to all of the different lakes in the eastern Uintas. So during that first three or four years, I got acquainted with most of the lakes on both sides of the mountain. They were always fishing trips. Most of the fish were rainbow or eastern brook.

There was one lake called Verlie Lake (named for the wife of one of the Stringham family) that had native fish in it. I think that Wildlife Resources has tried to keep that lake populated with that one species. The lakes were all originally planted by sheep-herding people that would carry the middle-size fish in milk cans on pack horses to dump into the lakes. Of course, by the time they had dumped the milk can into a lake, about half of the fish would be dead. There were enough live ones, though, to get the lakes all propagated.

The year I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, I think it was 1954, we started a campaign to get the High Uinta Lakes planted by airplanes. A local flyer, by the name of Jack Turner, had learned from colleagues in Colorado how to rig a small plane with a small tank of fish that could be flown over a lake at an altitude of a hundred feet or so and drop the fish from the plane.

KI: You undertook that campaign with the Chamber of Commerce to increase tourism?

Dr. Seager: Well, we weren't interested especially in tourism. Everyone liked to fish. Men, women, and children all liked to fish. I always did fly fishing myself; quite often bait fishing was the most productive.

KI: Did you tie your own flies?

Dr. Seager: No. We had a couple of different men here in Vernal that tied good flies. We would have fish every evening, but we would wait until the last day we were on the mountain to save the fish to bring home because we didn't have any way of keeping them very well.

KI: When you went on these trips, did you go alone, or did Dorothy go with you, or your kids?

Dr. Seager: I already mentioned that I went on fishing trips with a lot of different men. After several years of going on pack trips with different men, I decided to take Dorothy with me, and as soon as our two children got to be eight years of age, they went with us, too. I always made about three pack trips a year that would last for almost a week's time. That went on year after year until we were too old to ride horseback anymore. After leaving home, I never owned a horse. I always had good friends that wanted me to use their horses. I even had a couple friends that wanted me to use their horses without paying them anything. I always insisted on paying anyway.

People in the Basin... I don't think it was just in the Basin. I think back at that time people liked to do things for other people. I had at least a dozen people in the Basin invite me to come and hunt pheasants on their place. They would invite me to go on hunting trips with them. If a person liked you, that is the way they were, they would invite you to do something with them. If you enjoyed each other's company, that was so much the better. I never had trouble making friends with people. I always liked people.

KI: Tell me about your involvement in different civic organizations.

Dr. Seager: Well, I had belonged to a Lions Club in Nevada. In my four years in Bingham Canyon, I hadn't joined a club there because we were too busy in the hospital, seven days a week. After coming out here, I was invited to join the Lions Club, which was the major civic organization at that time. All of the important men in town belonged to the Lions Club. It was an organization that had a lot of influence.

KI: Could you tell me some of the other men that would have belonged the same time you were involved?

Dr. Seager: Nearly all the businessmen along Main Street. The two most prominent individuals in town at that time were Bry Stringham, who was a State Senator, and Hugh Colton, who was an attorney. After being retired for twenty-five years, most of the men I associated with back at that time are not here anymore, so the names kind of fade out.

KI: What kind of projects did you do? Do you remember any of them?

Dr. Seager: The biggest project in 1944-45, before I came here, was to get the Field House of Natural History built. Bry Stringham was responsible for getting the funds from the State Legislature for that to take place. I think with every civic club, Lions Club, Kiwanis, Jr. Chamber of Commerce, and Chamber of Commerce, and, of course, the ladies had a couple of different organizations, too. I think the broad term, called public relations, was always a major project. Every organization was always trying to raise funds for different civic activities and charities. The Lions Club was always trying, and they still are trying, to raise money for eyeglasses and to help the blind. That was always Lions Club project.

I have to say again, it has been so long ago, that I don't remember any specific.

KI: In your opinion, was it easier to get people involved in civic activities, say back in the '40s and '50s, than you see happening now?

Dr. Seager: I think, nearly everyone wanted to belong to an organization of some kind. It makes you feel more important. If you belong to half a dozen different organizations, that's something to keep you busy and you get to know more people. Businessmen, especially, always wanted to belong to the most popular organization in town with the idea it would help their business. A lot of men found out that it didn't make any difference with their business, so they would drop out of the organization. Human beings are just that way. They want whatever group or organization they belong to to be worthwhile.

A civic organization is actually to help other people, not just to help yourself. It is supposed to help other people. The Chamber of Commerce, of course, is based on the principle of helping all the different businesses, and helping the schools, and helping to advance the economy of the area. The Rotary Club, for several years, has had a major program, that's called the eradication of polio. Poliomyelitis was always a crippling disease. In this country the advent of poliomyelitis vaccine has pretty well eliminated polio for a large number of years now. We still have a lot polio in other countries. The Rotary Club has been responsible for a major project of providing enough polio vaccine to every country in the world, to have every child vaccinated.

KI: How do they raise their funds for that? Do they ask for donations?

Dr. Seager: Mostly by donation. Each Rotary member would donate whatever amount of money he was willing to part with. The civic organizations are always asking for donations for different projects. Of course, all of the civic clubs are international. Quite a bit of the funds go to the national organization to help with the major projects they are working on.

KI: So, you were a member of the Lions Club, then the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary. Would tell me about the Knife and Fork Club?

Dr. Seager: I think it was the second year I was here, Bry Stringham and Hugh Colton came to me and asked if I would take on the task of organizing a Knife and Fork Club. They had both been invited to attend a Knife and Fork Club in Salt Lake a time or two and thought it would be a nice thing for Vernal. The Knife and Fork Club was an organization that once a month had a formal dressed-up affair, dinner, followed by a speaker. The speakers were all arranged for by a national organization that had a lot of trained, important individuals that made a living out of traveling across the country speaking. We were able to get enough members that first year to organize a Knife and Fork Club. I have a President's plaque downstairs that has 1947 on it.

The Knife and Fork Club was a very successful activity, people enjoyed it about five years. Then I had turned the presidency over to another person at that time, and for some reason or another, the people had lost interest and weren't willing to come up with the annual fee it required. The Knife and Fork Club was abandoned. We had the meetings in the only hotel that was in town at the time. It was the hotel that is located on Main Street and 1st East, the Hotel Vernal. I think for several years it has been the Lamplighter.

KI: Did you ever have any meetings or put on any dances in the Imperial Hall?

Dorothy: We went to dances there several times, New Years Eve dances. I definitely remember one New Years dance there. Dr. Spendlove and his wife were there, the usual crowd, you know, Chuck and Lil Henderson. It was too bad they tore it down.

KI: Can you tell me about your relationship with Ernie Untermann? You mentioned a story about the Diplodocus dinosaur cast that you helped to bring back.

Dr. Seager: Ernie Untermann and his wife, Billie, who was a native girl. Ernie was a palaeontologist and evidently an expert palaeontologist and a geologist. He and his wife, Billie, had been here in the area looking for fossilized material for several years. He had influenced the Lions Club to get a building built to house the fossilized material. The local people, along with Ernie, wanted the material kept here in Vernal, instead of shipping it off to other museums. The first dinosaur bones from the quarry down in Jensen had all been shipped to different museums, especially the Carnegie Institute. One of the most complete, big dinosaurs was the Diplodocus. Those bones had all been shipped back to Carnegie Institute and they had made casts of the bones so the casts could be used to form duplicates. The Carnegie Institute, over a period of years, had made about eleven duplicates of the Diplodocus that had been given or sent to different countries. They were probably duplicates that they charged a price for. I'm not acquainted with the financial arrangements that may have taken place. I get mixed up in the years. I was president of the Lions Club about 1954. The Knife and Fork Club was 1947 [when he was president].

KI: So you went back to the Carnegie Institute to help get these casts?

Dorothy: He donated money—that was a big item.

KI: You told me about Av Kay's brother's, what was his name?

Dr. Seager: Dr. LeRoy Kay. He was a palaeontologist and a geologist that worked and was employed by the Carnegie Institute. He was a native of this area; his younger brother was Av Kay. Dr. Kay and Ernie Untermann were good friend and he had let Ernie know that the casts that had been made at the Institute were just in storage. The Institute actually wanted to get rid of them. So, if Ernie would arrange to send a large truck back there to get them, the Field House of Natural History in Vernal could have them. So, Ernie approached the Lions Club to take on the project to send a trucker back to Pittsburgh and get the casts. So, Grant Southam was in the trucking business and was willing to go back and get the casts for just what the trip would cost him. Sometime after the casts were back here in the Field House, this picture was taken. That is a local picture. I never did go back to Pittsburgh, except to travel through it when I was in medical school. I went to the University of Pennsylvania.

KI: The other thing you mentioned to me was you hauled rocks for the Field House.

Dr. Seager: Actually, the Dinosaur Gardens Committee had been created by the Chamber of

Commerce. I think the Dinosaur Gardens was about twenty years old, so it was around 1980 that the State had come up with the funds to have the dinosaur replicas paid for and shipped from southern Utah to Vernal to go into a Dinosaur Gardens area.

The Kiawanis Club was responsible for putting the fence around the area. Every organization in town helped create that garden. I can't tell you just what each organization did, but every organization did something to help start those gardens. It was actually a community affair.

The State Parks was responsible for the Field House. I guess because the State had provided the money to build the Field House in the first place, it automatically belonged to the State Parks organization, and the grounds that were used to develop the gardens, that was automatically owned by the State Parks, too. But the State Parks never furnished any money to do the gardens. It all came from the community.

In developing the gardens, we had formed a Dinosaur Gardens Committee and because I was the best acquainted with the Book Cliff Mountains, I was asked to organize a group to go and obtain rocks that could be used in the gardens. So, I got together a group of individuals that had trucks and tripods, loading equipment, and we had a caravan of about twenty-five outfits. A lot of them took their whole families and made a day's outing out of it. We went out into the Book Cliffs in what is called Johnson's Draw and brought back truckloads of the flat rocks that were used to make the seats and the steps. All the rocks in the gardens are from the Book Cliffs.

KI: Even those big round ones? Did you get those too?

Dr. Seager: No. Those are called cannon balls. A lot of the people in town have them. They come out of the Frontier Geological Formation.

KI: How are they formed?

Dorothy: There are a lot of them. If you hike around, you'll see them everywhere.

Dr. Seager: They are actually, what in geology are called concretions. These concretions are actually mud stones that were formed around a core of organic material. The local Frontier Formation, where it occurs, is full of these concretions, still is. If you drive some of the Brush Creek road, for instance, you will pass cliffs of the Frontier Formation, and you can see these big round balls. They occur anywhere from one foot in diameter to ten feet in diameter. A lot of them are big ones. Of course, they have never been brought into town. A lot of them are still in the cliffs, only partly exposed. They would have to be blasted out. Of course, over thousands of years of time, the cliffs have gradually worn down and some of these concretions have fallen out and rolled down the hillside so anybody could pick one up that had the equipment to do it. One of the places in town that has the best, fairly large ones is the Engineering Building. We have a couple of small ones in the backyard. Not very big ones.

KI: Tell me your feelings about Echo Park Dam.

Dr. Seager: I don't remember the details, but the Bureau of Reclamation was a federal agency that was created to build dams and develop irrigation systems in the west. Their original plan was

to build dams and develop irrigations systems on all of the rivers in the west—all of them. Of course, that has been done, from the Columbia River in the north to the Colorado River in the south, and the Colorado River Basin, of course, is where Vernal is located.

Vernal, being close to the Green River, which is a major tributary of the Colorado, was involved in all the early planning to build a dam in every suitable location and to provide and build dams that could be used for hydro-power systems, as well as irrigation. The cost of building a dam was to be taken care of by the sale of electricity and charging so much for the use of the water by irrigation companies.

The year I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, in 1954, we had a convention here in Vernal to allocate the water of the Upper Basin States. That's the states of Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona and the southern tip of Nevada. A previous allocation had taken place that gave California a guaranteed amount of water each year and the Upper Basin States were supposed to store and utilize the rest of the water; all the water that hadn't been permanently allocated to California.

Part of the development on the Colorado system happened to be in Dinosaur National Monument. At the time Dinosaur National Monument was created, a provision in the act was supposed to allow for the development of water systems. See, most of the federal laws prohibit the development of any commercial systems in a national park or national monument, but the local people had been responsible for making an exception in Dinosaur National Monument. So, the engineers had plans for building a dam on the Green River in Whirlpool Canyon, what would be called Echo Park Dam.

Of course, nearly everyone locally was in favor of building Echo Park Dam. I hadn't been involved in the process enough to have any firm convictions one way or the other. The river-running people, especially the Hatch family, were strongly opposed to the dam, but everyone else in the Basin were in favor of it. Money had been raised to have a delegation go back to Washington to plead the cause before Congress. Ernie Untermann was not exactly a naturalist, but he had been talked into going back with the delegation which was in favor of building Echo Park Dam. I gave Ernie \$200 to defray his traveling expenses. That's the most I got involved in the process of building Echo Park Dam.

In the final analysis, the Sierra Club and other environmentalist groups had more influence in Congress than the local people had. So, the building of Echo Park Dam had to be given up. The engineers came up with a plan to build a dam in the Flaming Gorge area and that did occur.

Dorothy: We watched that take place. It wasn't too far from our cabin.

Dr. Seager: We built the cabin in Greendale in 1959, and that was when the building of the dam was just being started.

KI: Were you familiar with Linwood before it was inundated?

Dr. Seager: Oh yes. As a matter of fact, the state senator of Daggett County bought one of our lots in Flaming Gorge Acres in Greendale. He had two old cabins from Linwood moved to Greendale on his lot. It's actually a state historical site now. He had incorporated it into his cabin, built his cabin and then put these [older ones one it]. He had Fran Feltch build a cabin for him on

the lot and he has one of the old cabins on either side of it. It made a nice cabin.

KI: Okay, now could you tell me about the petroglyph that's named after you? I can't remember the whole name of it.

Dr. Seager: Well, we were on our travels around Southern Utah and into Arizona and New Mexico and other western states and we were always interested in Indian sites and petroglyphs and pictographs and old ruins. Archeology was one of our major interests for years. We had an archeology group, with monthly meetings, and we would frequently have a speaker from one of the state organizations. One of those speakers talked about the occurrence of what were called "solar panels."

Over the centuries, mankind has always used different ways to determine the position of the sun at different times of the year. So, you can have a solar panel that will form a sunlight marking or a shadow at a given time of the year. The ancient populations were pretty intelligent when it came to the study of astronomy. A lot of the ancient populations knew the travel of the sun and the moon and the constellations in the heavens a lot better than most people do now.

So, the ancient Indian populations had, in every location, picked out a place that they could use for what we call now a solar panel. On this Black Rock Ridge north of town are a lot of petroglyphs and pictographs and one of them has a life-size pictograph figure of a man with a headdress.

There was one year when I was about twenty years younger and had enough ambition to get up and be at different locations at sunrise and watch for the possibility of a solar marking. I found one location in the Ridge where there is a gully about fifty feet wide, and right at sunrise a beam of light would come into a notch on one side of the gully, on the east side, and shine into the headdress of the figure on the other side of the gully. It occurs exactly on June 21st or 22nd every year. Year after year.

After discovering that was a solar site, I invited other individuals to watch it at sunrise on those dates; and there were several years that different archeology groups would be there to watch the demonstration. It finally got named the Seager Summer Solstice Solar Site. It is on what is called Rock Point Ridge. It's the ridge that borders Steinaker Reservoir. You can see it from the road if you know where to look.

KI: Tell me about your interest in flowers and what you really like about them.

Dr. Seager: Have you ever been to a service club meeting? We have done this a lot of times for a lot of different organizations and groups, besides the practice of taking field trips.

At the beginning I grew up loving flowers in Tremonton. Before it was all cultivated, we had a lot of different wildflowers in Bear River Valley and on the adjacent mountains and in the canyons. So, I grew up in a wildflower area. When I went to the University, I studied some botany and spent a lot of my spare time in the arboretum. When I went to school in Philadelphia, they had an excellent arboretum and also an estate in the Chestnut Hill area, north, that had a square mile that had been developed into gardens with trees and shrubs and different flowers from all around the world. They were cultivated flowers and wildflowers. When you have a whole square mile to create a nature district, you can plant an awful lot of trees and shrubs and a lot of different flowers besides that grow naturally. At the same time I was studying medicine, I

was also becoming a naturalist.

Being a naturalist is something that is with you all the time. No matter where you go, no matter what you do, you are a naturalist. Making a serious study of all the natural sciences has been my major hobby. After I retired, there had been an organization formed in town called the Mountain Club. The initial president was one of the local doctors, Dr. Durrant. He's not very well-liked in town because he is a naturalist. Because he's a radical environmentalist, that's the reason he isn't liked very well out here. Most of the Mountain Club members are pretty nice individuals, they are not all too radical.

Dr. Durrant heard about my being knowledgeable of all the wildflower areas; so he talked me into taking the Mountain Club people on a wildflower trip. The first trip we made was in Dry Fork Canyon, that was in the latter part of May, and they liked it so well that they talked me into taking them on a trip in June, which we did, going on across the mountain. We got in the Montane zone of the mountain for wildflowers in June. So, then they followed that up with the third request to take them on a wildflower trip to the higher mountain. So, I picked the Leidy Peak area of the High Uintas to take them in the middle of July.

You know, we had a lot of early explorers and surveyors and scientific men exploring the west in the early days and Leidy happened to be a physician. From the valley you can see Marsh Peak. Marsh happened to be a palaeontologist and a geologist and he was always at odds with a colleague. Marsh Peak got named after him and a little bit, five miles further north, is Leidy Peak. Those two peaks are the eastern end of the High Uintas.

Dorothy: He always had good turnouts for his tours. A couple of years ago there was even a couple from England on the tour.

Dr. Seager: We've had several tours a year, for years, until this year. I haven't had a publicized tour this year. We've made tours that we've just invited friends to go along.

KI: What do you talk about when you go on those tours?

Dr. Seager: We always covered everything we happened to see. Birds, animals, geology, besides plants and shrubs and flowers. Flowers, you can take a whole life time studying the intricate make-up of flowers. There are thousands of different kinds and they all have different properties. Don't get me started on talking about botany.

Dorothy: Since he has reached the age of 92, we decided we wouldn't do these tours anymore.

Dr. Seager: We still go out at least three days a week ourselves.

Dorothy: And if we are going someplace special, we usually have several other people going with us because it is an outstanding place.

Dr. Seager: Actually, flowers are the most intricate and beautiful thing that has been created. Oh yes, I love fragrant flowers.

End of tapes.

